Quarter one book: Skullduggery Pleasant

By: Harrison Marshall

TITLE, AUTHOR, GENRE, REASON I PICKED THIS BOOK, AND SUMMARY

The name of this riveting novel By Derek Landy is called Skullduggery Pleasant. I choose this book because it is generally an all around good book. You can pick it up, put it back down and pick it back up again and figure out exactly where in the story you are, its very descriptive yet is simple enough for a middle school student to read, and if you love good kill scenes, this book has plenty of gore to cure that appetite. This book fits into the mystery/adventure/horror/ mystery novel genre because it has enough gore in it to scare anyone, there is enough fight scenes in it to make movie out of it, and the whole book revolves around one mystery; who killed Gordon Edgely. This book starts off with a 13-year-old girl named Stephanie Edgely. She is at a funeral party for her uncle Gordon Edgely where she starts wandering though his enormous house. This when she unknowingly meets Skullduggery Pleasant. Skullduggery then leaves in a black Bentley and Stephanie goes to the reading of her uncles will and Skullduggery Pleasant is there as well. Skullduggery receives some advice; Stephanie’s parents receive Gordon’s old Villa, and Stephanie gets his mansion, his royalties and his cars to be inherited the day she turns 18. This causes everyone in the room to stare at her. Skullduggery begins to leave but touches Stephanie’s shoulder first and says “congratulations” in a voice that is said to be smoother that velvet. That night Stephanie decides to stay at the house to get a look at her new house. At about 2:00 AM she gets calls from some one who has been sent to get a key from the house. He blows open one of the windows and climbs in. At about this time, Skullduggery Pleasant comes in and starts kicking and beating the guy to death. The mystery man gets up and Skullduggery proceeds to throw fire at him by clicking his fingers, but not before his hat and wig falls off to show that he is a skeleton underneath. From that point on, Stephanie joins up with Skullduggery to find out who killed her uncle with the help of Skullduggery Pleasant.

Three characters

Three very important characters to the riveting novel, Skullduggery Pleasant, are Skullduggery Pleasant himself, Stephanie Edgely, and Nefarious Serpine. Skullduggery Pleasant is one of the main characters and who the book is named after. Skullduggery is a skeleton detective brought back through the power of necromancy, after being brutally murdered by his enemies, more importantly Nefarious Serpine. Skullduggery is an elemental wizard, which means he can wield the elements as apposed to just punching and actual combat. He is also a metaphorical wagon to whisk Stephanie off to a world that she has been missing and craving. His quote to support this metaphor is when he reaches to get his hat back from Stephanie; he says, “don’t say I didn’t warn you”. This brings up the next important character, Stephanie Edgely. Stephanie is an average 13-year-old girl who lives in Haggard, Ireland, which is where the story takes place. Stephanie is bored with her life and wishes she could be whisked off to a world of wonder magic and danger. Luckily for her, Skullduggery Pleasant shows up and grants this wish. At first Stephanie really can’t do much beside thrash out randomly with a hope of getting hit. Throughout the book though she becomes a thoroughly deadly fighting machine. She even helps take out Nefarious Serpine at the end of the book by being an unintentional distraction. This entails being tortured by his red right hand, which causes a slow agonizing death. This brings up the final important Character, Nefarious Serpine. Serpine is primarily an adept magician and is a very nasty killer. He is the one who killed Skullduggery hundreds of years ago and stuck his head on a steak. Serpine also killed Skullduggery’s family right in front of him. In short, Serpine is not a nice man. He worships a bunch of evil hateful gods called the faceless ones who wants to bring back to destroy the world. Even though Serpine is an adept, he picked a particularly nasty Necromancer trick where his hand has been stripped of flesh so only muscle and blood is showing. If Serpine points this had at you, you are done. It tortures you and kills you slowly. There is now way to defend against it. A signature quote from Serpine talking about his hand is “I picked up some new tricks I think you will enjoy. His fingers waved, and the Detective started screaming”.

Themes and big ideas

One big idea in this book is there can be whole world of magic and fun at your fingertips. You just have to have the courage to go for it. Stephanie is a living example of this. She was bored with her life and tired of her small Irish town. Then Skullduggery showed up and took her off to a world that met exactly what she craved. Another big theme in this book is be careful what you wish for, you may get it. This meaning that, when Stephanie was plunged into this world within a world she thought it was fun at first. Then she almost dies and broke her leg. Then she was a little bit more cautious from that point on. The final theme is what comes around goes around because at the very end after Serpine had Skullduggery’s family and Skullduggery himself, Skullduggery turned him to ash and killed Serpine. After all the horror Serpine inflicted on Skullduggery, Serpine was finally toppled from his pedestal. Skullduggery even said to Serpine, “you’re going to fall Nefarious. And I’m going to be the one pushing you”.

One major problem

One major problem in this book is when Stephanie’s aunt and uncle Beryl and Fergus get the broach at the reading of the will, you have the feeling in the back of your head that says, “I’m going to see that gain”. And sure enough you do, so Skullduggery and Stephanie can get into the caves so they could get the scepter. It kind of ruins some of the story guessing what the twist will be because you pretty much already figure it out at the beginning of the book. Another issue with the book is, if Skullduggery has a big powerful revolver, why does he always get into these huge magic fights when he could simply just shoot the victim. Makes for a lot more interesting and funny scenes in the book. It would also make things easier on Skullduggery himself. Another thing that doesn’t make a whole lot of sense is, if Serpine has this evil right hand, why hasn’t someone just decided to go up and cut off his right hand. It would make talking to him and fighting with him a lot easier. It also would make it so Stephanie doesn’t almost die in the end. You could just walk up to him and beat the crap out him and then leave. It’s kind of a hole in the story. It really couldn’t be that hard to sneak up on him or have a bunch of people surround him and lop off his hand. It’s just kind of a hole in the story.

3 new words

Cain

Sentence: I suppose you do share my penchant for raising CAIN

Definition – to make trouble

Appraise

Sentence: … watched the Mourners casually appraise the their surroundings

Definition – to give value to

Arrogant

ARROGANT irresponsible yes, but an enormous amount of fun.

Definition – to be very ignorant

Nonsensical

Sentence: “He starts it, makes up NONSENSICAL words to fill in the blanks of the ones he doesn’t know, and abandons the puzzle”.

Definition – something that doesn’t make sense.

Raison d’être

Sentence: Raison d’être. It’s French for reason to be.

Definition – a reason to exist

What this book reminds me of

This book actually and very surprisingly reminds me of the harry potter series. It has magic; good vs. evil, and trying to brink back a supreme evil being. Harry potter definitely has magic. Harry potter definitely has good versus evil, which is harry potter up against Voldemort and the death eaters. Both these books also have a good bit of humor to them but Skullduggery Pleasant humor tends to be a little more sarcastic whereas harry potter humor tends to have small subtext place jokes. Another thing this book and its series remind me of is a lot of heavy metal rocks bands. My guess as to why this makes any since is the violence in this book is very similar to the artful murder of Metallica or the pure violence and brutality of AxeWound. Another thing this book reminds me of is the SAW movie series. I again, attribute this fact to the violence in the book. This comparison does have some merit to it though. SAW at the end is good versus evil but everyone at the end reaches a very gruesome demise but the games stop. In Skullduggery Pleasant everything is good versus evil and the villain always reaches a rather nasty and terrible demise.

3d project



The makeshift foam skull you see above is supposed to represent skullduggery’s original head. If you read the book you will learn that skullduggery was on a steak out near a church before he met Stephanie. Skullduggery fell asleep in his secret tent and these “little gremlin things” nicked it right off his neck and took off with it. He won his current head in a poker game and has been using it ever since. Stephanie describes it as wearing someone else’s socks, and that it should be very uncomfortable. Skullduggery replies back to her saying that you eventually get used to it and he rather likes it.